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ABSTRACT

A rationale for the study of Canada by Americans is advocated in this paper. Among the justifications for the study are: our common geographical environment; our need to comparatively understand the cultural, economic, political, and social differences and similarities of the two countries; the part Canada can play in serving as a laboratory for U. S. experiments; the question of resources for future development of our own society; security needs; examination of differing viewpoints toward foreign policy; investment possibilities; and study of anti-Americanism. While geography supports the logic of unification that has made Americans and Canadians neighbors and allies, history and economics have not made the two countries amiable partners. Elimination of ignorance about Canada through the implementation of Canadian studies in U. S. schools and colleges can contribute much toward cooperation between the two countries. (SJM)

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# The Rationale for Canadian Studies in Schools of the United States

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We Americans so often assert and so seldom test the validity of our cherished notion of difference or uniqueness. This is in large part the result of the fact that those with whom we would compare ourselves, primarily the European countries, are so obviously different in their growth, development and experiences.

In Canada, we find a country that has developed along quite different lines, in spite of being so geographically proximate, so similar in environment, with a like period of settlement, and also possessing an isolation from Europe and Asia.

Most Canadians have a considerable, if malevolent knowledge of the United States, while most Americans have a benevolent ignorance of Canada. This situation is the result of a variety of factors and forces. It reflects the unchanging realities of both physical geography and history, as well as the more dynamic elements of human geography, economics and international affairs.

The importance of Canada is obvious. One need only look at a map. Yet at times and to most Americans, it does not appear so obvious. It might be suggested that Americans have a moral duty to know more about Canada. But why? Don't we have a moral duty to know more about every country with which the United States is involved? Yes, but in Canada's case this duty is especially strong. The distinguished historian, J. Bartlett Brebner put it perhaps best of all when he described the United States and Canada as "the Siamese twins of North America who cannot separate and live."

We are both part of the North American continent. The physical elements of this continent cannot be divided by a man-drawn political line. Neither water nor air respect man's political boundaries.

A human separation is perhaps more possible but potentially as fatal as a physical one and equally as absurd. The very essence of the Canadian-American relationship is the dual roots of a largely common geographical environment and a partly common history.

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It is not possible to know Canada unless one knows the whole of which it is a part. Canada is not American but rather North American.

Canada has been called "America's problem" even though many problems loom as large or larger for the United States. Such is not the case in Canada. There is no other country for which the United States creates such problems as Canada. While many problems do exist for Canada, the United States is THE problem.

Americans may then study Canada out of a sense of moral obligation. Or we may study it in an academic sense, like any other area or topic, for itself alone. Neither of these reasons is strong enough to generate more widespread study knowledge of Canada in this country.

We are a crisis oriented people. Our college students pick their courses or majors in terms of areas of crisis for the United States. Our college professors focus their research and make their grant applications with an eye on the explosive areas of the world. Our government becomes interested only when an upheaval seems imminent or United States interests are threatened. Our relations with Canada rarely reach the crisis stage like those with the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, or other areas of the world. On the few occasions when a serious rift seems to be developing, it is quickly attended to.

Between these two extremes, one generated by a sense of moral obligation, the other by a sense of crisis psychology, there exists a variety of other justifications for the study of Canada by Americans.

There are those who suggest that the similarities between the United States and Canada are so great that one does not need to study Canada to understand it. This false assumption of too much similarity is a dangerous one. On the other hand, it does provide one justification for the study of Canada. We need to understand things which are similar to help us understand things which are radically different. An understanding of Canada, its

peoples and their attitudes, would be the logical first step in understanding of other nations and countries with little or no similarity to the United States. If, with the degree of similarity that does exist between the two countries, it is difficult or impossible for the United States and Canada to get along, then one sees little hope for the United States and the rest of the world.

A variation on the theme of similarity and another justification for the study of Canada by Americans is found in the current fad for comparative studies. There are those who now suggest that area studies per se -- USSR, Africa, Far East -- are on the decline. That more can be learned about these areas by a comparative approach with a focus on common or similar institutions and problems than by a simple study of the area or country itself. Those favoring such an approach further suggest that the greater the degree of similarity, the greater will be the understanding of our own American patterns and processes. In such an approach it is important that comparative studies do not mean parallel studies. That such an approach would not mean, for instance, half a semester on United States problems and half on Canadian problems, but rather an integrated study of the problems of race in both countries; or of the problems of federalism; or of immigration patterns; or of foreign policy. Through such an approach the more subtle and unique aspects of the United States would become clear while at the same time providing considerable insight into Canada (or any other country).

Still another justification for the study of Canada could be labelled a utilitarian one, particularly in the field of economics. It is suggested that Canada can be looked at as a laboratory for United States experiments. Its population, one-tenth the size of that of the United States, provides a sort of control group for programs destined for a country of two hundred million. There are several programs which the United States has been slow or afraid to initiate or expand. Canadian experiences (in most cases successes), with such things as family

allowances, nation-wide contributory portable pensions, and medicare, are worth studying by those advocating similar programs in the United States. The early introduction and success in Canada on a nationwide basis of unemployment insurance and old age pensions, did not go unnoticed in the United States.

The so-called radical idea of federal-state tax sharing, currently advocated by many in the United States, has a precedent of long standing in Canada. Dominion-provincial tax sharing or tax rental agreements have existed since the 1940s.

For those Americans concerned about increasing government control or influence in the economic sector, Canada provides an example of a combination of well-established governmental participation in one of the most open economies in the world. She is the only economically advanced country with a flexible exchange rate.

Canada has served still another laboratory function for segments of the United States. Many American cities have watched with interest and at times envy, the development of metropolitan government for Toronto and its suburbs. Variations of this pattern are to be found in other Ontario cities and elsewhere in Canada.

The question of resources for the future development of our own society once more justifies a focus on Canada. Nowhere in the world is such a storehouse so readily available to us. Some in the United States see the solution to our water problems in the untapped capacity of the Canadian north. Such proposals as the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) depend on Canadian cooperation and participation. New England and New York, especially, look to Canadian rivers for much-needed hydro-electric power. Many parts of the United States increasingly desire access to the oil and natural gas of the Canadian prairies. Many areas expect to benefit from Alaskan oil delivered by way

of the Canadian Arctic or by a trans-Canadian pipeline. American industries depend on Canadian nickel and asbestos entirely, and to a large extent on iron ore, pulp and paper, and other raw materials.

United States national security is but one more item on the long list of reasons why Americans should know more about Canada. No sane person considers the defense of our country without the other. The Permanent Joint Board on Defense, and the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), inextricably link the two countries. Every Canadian recognized the absolute impossibility of defending his country without American help. Every American should recognize the impossibility of defending his own country against an occupied, defeated, or weakened Canada.

In the area of foreign policy, while Canada and the United States share many common goals and viewpoints stemming from their North American position, there are important differences in specific areas. Widespread Canadian criticism of the United States' Vietnam policy exists; Canada has never considered either Communist China or Cuba to be the threat that their southern neighbors do. Understandably, Canada has sought by its actions to establish and maintain its individuality and separateness from the United States. Her support of United Nations peace-keeping efforts, her continuing membership in the Commonwealth, and her refusal to join the Organization of American States are examples of this latter policy.

The attraction of Canada as a safe place for American investment, and as a major recreation area are two more reasons for the American people as individuals and as a whole to learn more about their northern neighbor and understand better her attitudes. In understanding the things that are similar, we take the first step in understanding those things that are different. Those things that give Canada her individuality.

Canadian perception of the land and its role in the country's development has been quite different than in the United States.

The fascination and concern with the Canadian North cannot be duplicated in our own country.

Canadian democratic self-government was achieved without a revolution. This fact has left an indelible imprint on constitutional development.

Regionalism in Canada, geographical, historical, cultural and economic, is simpler and more important than in the United States. The most important manifestation of Canadian regionalism, and the single most important fact differentiating Canada from the United States, is the French-Canadian presence.

For those in the United States who justify early study of Latin America, Africa or Asia, on the grounds of the needed introduction to another culture and another language, nothing is more accessible or logical than the study of French Canada.

The study of the French-Canadians in Canada and the problem of the status of Quebec, within the context of the study of Canada, provides at once the opportunity for comparative studies coupled with the economy that comes from geographical proximity.

Lastly, the great potential value to Americans of all ages in understanding why peoples all over the world, in varying degrees and at different times, are or have been anti-American, can be obtained by an understanding of Canada, a country which takes its anti-Americanism as a fact of life. But a country whose citizens do not let this feeling interfere with their own day-to-day pursuit and enjoyment of American productivity and culture.

It was stated earlier that the importance of Canada was obvious. Geography makes it so. It is to be hoped that it can never be said that geography has made us friends but history and economics have made us enemies. For, while geography supports the logic of unification, history provides the justification for separateness.

In May of 1961, on his first visit outside the United States after becoming President, John F. Kennedy addressed a joint session of the Canadian Parliament. The significance of this gesture, in making Canada the first foreign country he visited was not lost on the Canadian people. In his speech he made the following remarks:

> "In the effort to build a continent of economic growth and solidarity, in an effort to build a hemisphere of freedom and hope, in an effort to build an Atlantic community of strength and unity of purpose, and in an effort to build a world of lasting peace and justice, Canada and the United States must be found, and I am certain will be found, standing where they have always stood, together.
>
> Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder."

President Kennedy's assumption that the two countries would be found standing together is a valid one. No realistic Canadian considers any other alternative.

But most Canadians would hope, in fact insist, that while geography is unchanging and history is unchangeable, knowledge and understanding are dynamic and expandable. Geography and necessity may have made us neighbors and allies; but history and economics have not necessarily nor always made us friends and partners. Great progress towards the realization of President Kennedy's sentiments could be made with a change from ignorance to knowledge, whether it remains benevolent or not. Such a happy development would do much to overcome the malevolence, active or quiescent, that exists north of the border.

These then, ladies and gentlemen, are the thoughts and perceptions that provide us with a rationale for Canadian Studies in the schools and colleges of the United States.